

Four female monarchs crowned during the Children and Youth Dande Festival 2022

ORANJESTAD – Last Wednesday at the Centro di Bario Tanki Leendert, the Children and Youth Dande Festival took place with the presentation of seven musical group and 19 contestants, who gave their all on this night to show that Aruba's Dande tradition is still alive.

Dande

The most traditional cultural intangible heritage Aruba has throughout the Christmas season is called Dande. The Dande is a local oral tradition where the song "ay nabe" (aña nabo) – "new year" is performed as the New Year is approaching or has arrived. Dande stems from the word Dandalia, which loosely translates into "to party, he who parties, or simply paranda". The first sentence of the Dande song "oh dande nos a jega na bo porta" – Ay Nabe, translated means "Oh the party has arrived at your door" – New Year. The origin of the Dande is not known, however there are many theories such as: 1. Its starting in the district of Savaneta, 2. Its starting in the district of Noord, 3. Its popularity strengthened in the district of St. Cruz, or 4. Its starting after the abolition of slavery in 1863 by the Dutch King.

A group of five or sometimes even six people (one singer accompanied by numerous musicians) usually performs the most known Aruban end of the year tradition. These people, usually family members accompany a singer and travel door-to-door to express their best wishes for the New Year in repetitive phrases (blessings), with a chorus that includes the phrase "ay nabe" (aña nabo) – "new year" – sung after each blessing. Currently, the celebratory travel usually leads to the houses of the singers' friends and family, where the singer collects money in his hat to give to the group. Traditionally the removal of the



singer's hat is considered a sign of respect he/she is expressing to the family and person they are singing to and blessing. Instead of money, back in the day, the singer would receive food (for example pan dushi "sweet bread") in their hat as a token of gratitude for their long trip. The singer starts by blessing the head of the house and then one

by one passes to every person present. Besides visiting local houses on New Year's Eve and the day after, the Dande tradition is very popular on the last working day of the year. Local businesses invite a Dande group to come and bless their workers and the company as the New Year approaches.



For more information about year-end celebrations in Aruba, please visit <https://www.arubatoday.com/culture-for-christmas/>

Children and Youth Dande Festival 2022

Under organization of the Commission for the Celebration of National Days of the Department of Culture, UNOCA and Chico Hams foundation – which organized the Festival itself last Tuesday at the Centro di Bario Brazil – the night began around 7pm to give opportunity to every participant to show their talent.

The winners were as follow:

Category 4-6 years:
Dande Queen 2022: Alyna Henriquez,
Finalists: Zaden Werleman and Sophia da Silva.

Category 7-9 years:
Dande Queen 2022: Kilai de Jongh,
Finalists: Elizee Bislip, Kijaili Croes and Jaymerson Kelly.

Category 10-12 years:
Dande Queen: Lidenne Webb,
Second Place: John-Maynard Wever.

Category 13-17 years:
Dande Queen: Jarienne Angela
Second Place: Stephanie Quant and Third Place: Renne Ras.

The Commission for the Promotion of Culture sends congratulations to all children, musicians, typical groups, band directors, composers, arrangers and the entire family, not leaving out the excellent work of the organizing team for a great event! □

